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V. — *The Scepticism and Fatalism of the Common People of Rome as Illustrated by the Sepulchral Inscriptions.*

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IN this paper I desire to show that the common people of Rome did not accept the mythology of the poets as their religious creed, that they placed no faith in the gods which occupy so prominent a place in Roman literature, and that their nearest approach to belief in a divinity was their recognition of fate as a blind, irresistible, inexplicable power which often interrupted the natural course of life. The consideration of this general subject has led me to question, in the case of a few inscriptions, the correctness of the interpretation which has usually been given.

I have attempted to make a complete collection of all the sepulchral inscriptions included in the *C. I. L.* which contain references to mythology. I have not found it necessary to refer to the comparatively few epitaphs which as yet have not been included in this work, as they do not throw any additional light on the subjects under consideration. The first list includes those epitaphs which contain the names of gods of the upper world, with the exception of Fortuna and the Fates, which are considered later. The second list contains the more general references to the gods of the upper world. The third list includes the references to the gods and regions of the lower world. The fourth list includes references to the earth as the mother and source of all things. I have, however, made one exception in the arrangement of these lists. The first time that I have had occasion to cite an inscription I have included in my quotations all the expressions which illustrate the various points under consideration. I have adopted this plan to show more clearly the number of inscriptions in which these references occur, and to bring out more

fully the character of the references in a given inscription. In these lists I have given first the inscriptions belonging to Rome, these are followed by those of the rest of Italy, and lastly come those of the provinces. After giving the number of each inscription in the *C. I. L.* I have added, in the case of poetic epitaphs, the reference to Bücheler's *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*. This will also serve as a means of distinguishing the epitaphs in verse from those in prose. The poetic epitaphs are quoted according to Bücheler. I have necessarily made the quotations brief, but have intended to give enough of the context to suggest the sense in which the words referred to are used.

In these lists I have not included the *Dii Manes* or any of the other gods to whom the epitaphs are dedicated. This dedication was usually a mere formality, without life or meaning. The form which it took depended largely on the locality in which the epitaph was composed. It seems to have been added in the majority of cases in conformity to custom, or to place the tomb under the protection which the laws accorded to objects dedicated to the gods.

XII. 5275 (1467) . . . durae mortis sacratos laedere Manes,
ecce monent leges et levis umbra rogi.

Accordingly dedications to the *Dis Manibus* are not uncommon even in the epitaphs of the Christians. I have also excluded from these lists the personification of the abstract virtues, such as *fides* and *pietas*.

I have also omitted references to *deus* when this word is used of the dead. Such references belong more properly to a consideration of the beliefs in immortality, a subject which I hope to take up in a second paper.

I have given the dates of a few important epitaphs where this was possible. In most cases the date cannot be determined, and, as far as concerns the beliefs of the common people, this is of minor importance. The horizon of the populace of Rome was very limited. The changing fashions and tastes in the literature and philosophy of the aristocracy which may be traced in the literature of Rome did not affect the multi-

tude. Their philosophy of life, if we may apply this term to their meagre beliefs or absolute scepticism, was not affected by court poets or state religion.

I. The gods of the upper world specified by name.

VI. 21521 (1109) Monumentum M. Luccei M. f. Nepotis. s. I. p. C.

7. exacta prope nocte suos quum Lucifer ignes
spargeret et uolucris roscidus iret equo.
19. non ego Tartareas penetrabo tristis ad undas
non Acheronteis transuehar umbra uadis,
non ego caeruleam remo pulsabo carinam
nec te terribilem fronte timebo, Charon,
nec Minos mihi iura dabit grandaeus.
26. defleat ut maerens Attica mater Ityn.
nam me sancta Venus sedes non nosse silentum
iussit.
31. die Nepos, seu tu turba stipatus Amorum
laetus Adoneis lusibus insereris,
seu grege Pieridum gaudes seu Palladis [arte,
omnis caelicolum te chor[u]s exc[ipiet].
si libeat thyrsus grauidis aptare co[rymbis]
et uelare comam palmite, Liber[eris].
40. non unus Cybeles pectore uiuet a[mor].

III. 754 (492) dispensator Moesiae inferioris. s. III. p. C.

3. regina Ditis magni regis, [p]recor hoc te.
10. Ditis regia. 11. Elysiis campis. 13. Lar mihi haec.
18. munera Bacchi.

VIII. 212 (1552) Mausolaeum Flauorum. s. II.

3. Elysiis terris. 28. Pallados usu.
37. sub honore deorum. 38. Acherontos in umbris.
51. munera Bacchi. 55. regnator Stygius. 56. Ditis domum.
- B. 5. quo nunc Calliope me cogis. 12. ebria Musa.
16. cogeret hic omnes surgere mane deos.

VIII. 1523 (1237) Mausolaeum Iuli Felicis. s. II.-III.

2. Thalia, ueni. 15. dominator Auerni.

VI. 1779 (111) augur, pontifex vestae. s. IV.

15. diuumque numen multiplex doctus colis
sociam benigne coniugem nectens sacris
hominum deumque consciam ac fidem tibi.

25. te teste cunctis imbuor mysteriis,
tu Dindymenes Atteosque antistitem
teletis honoras taureis consors pius,
Hecates ministram trina secreta edoces
Cererisque Graiae tu sacris dignam paras.
39. felix, maritum si superstitem mihi
diui dedissent.
54. Paulina uiri et castitatis conscia,
dicata templis atq. amica numinum.
- I. 1009, VI. 10096 (55). 9. docta, erodita paene Musarum manu.
19. Ditis domu.
- VI. 10098 (1110). s. I.
qui colitis Cybelem et qui Phryga plangitis Attin.
- VI. 12652 (995). s. I.
5. cui formam Paphie, Charites tribuere decorem,
quam Pallas cunctis artibus erudiit.
17. at nunc quod possum, fugiam lucemque deosque,
ut te matura per Styga morte sequar.
24. et faueant uotis numina cuncta tuis.
- VI. 7578 (422). s. II.
2. Persephones regna. 9. Musae mihi dederant.
- III. 686 (1233). s. III.
5. sortita Paphon diua. 12. vivis in Elysiis.
16. olim iussa deo simplicitas facilis.
17. Bromio signatae. 18. Satyrum. 19. Naides.
- VI. 1951 (1256) uos precor hoc, superi, ut uitam post me seruetis
amicis
et possint nostris Bacchum miscere fauillis.
- VI. 6319 (1066). 3. cursus Phoebeos. 8. Ditis foeda rapina feri.
- VI. 7898 (1058). 5. cumque pater materque deos pro me adularent,
at saeuos Pluto rapuit me ad infera templa.
10. huic sit iniqua Ceres perficiatque fame.
- VI. 9118 (467) ia tibi Cybeles sint et rosa grata Diones
et flores grati Nymphis et lilia sarta.
- VI. 12845 (387) rap] ta meis fatiis, superi sic namque iuebant,
null] a penetrali Lucinae sacra petenti.
- VI. 17985a (856). 4. nec defuit umqua Lyaeus.
6. cultrix deae Phariaes. 12. miscete Lyaeum.

- VI. 19055 (495). 4. Baccho madere. 8. Castorea sub imagine.
 VI. 20152 (606) fleuere Camenae.
 VI. 20674 (436) cum primum Lucina daret lucemq. animamque.
 VI. 21975 (67) Vulcano (= igni).
 VI. 23083 (1254) Fauni Nymphaeaeque sonabant.
 VI. 23852 (471) colo calathisque Mineruae.
 VI. 27383 (1061) quae speciem uultus habuitq. Cupidinis artus,
 dulcis ad Elysios rapta repente lacus.
 X. 2483 (1307) dulce istic nomen Glypte iacet, omnibus olim
 quas Venus inspexit praeferenda bonis.
 XI. 911 (1181) sic tibi dona Ceres larga det et Bromius.
 XIV. 914 (1318) balnia uina Venus. Cf. VI. 15258 (1499).
 XIV. 510 (1186). 3. infernis numinibus.
 9. rate infernas subito delatus ad umbras.
 13. illa tamen sancta et formata uerecundia saepe
 amittit Tantali aspectu et timorem Sisyphi,
 abest Ixion umbraeq. et Furiae metus,
 set in secessum numinis infernae domus
 oficiosus tandem ministerio laetatur suo.
 III. 4910 (453) Musarum amor et Charitum uoluptas.
 VIII. 8870 (501). 3. Ditis ad infernas sedes.
 4. quem docta studiis ornat diua Thalia.

II. General references to the gods of the upper world.

a. From epitaphs in verse.

- VI. 142 (1317) numinis antistes Sabazis Vincentius hic e[st],
 qui sacra sancta deum mente pia co[lui]t.
 VI. 3452 (476) uobis nunc dii fortuna beatam
 et semper ho(no)ratam praestent.
 Cf. VI. 6467 (130), VI. 18297 (816), III. 10501 (489).
 VI. 9604 (1253) testor superos. Cf. VI. 30134 (1257).
 VI. 12845 (387) rap]ta meis fatis, superi sic namque iubebant.
 VI. 12877 (435) hi sancte coluere deos uix[er]e[re] honeste,
 post obitum Elysios [ut] possent [uisere] campos.
 VI. 18385 (1184) r]apuere dei. Cf. VI. 24520 (1057), XIV. 3709
 (603).
 14. o mihi si superi vellent praestare roganti.

- VI. 25063 (1549). 1. dua funera maerens
 plango uir et genitor flebile mersa deo.
 sat fuerat, Porthmeu, cumba uexsisse maritam.
 14. raptumque Stygio detinet unda lacu.
 16. credabamque deis vota placere mea.
- VI. 27852 (1225) qua non ego uoce rogau
 infelix superos? nec ualuere preces. Cf. IX. 5401 (1514).
- VI. 29265 (1586) cuius uotis indulgere dei. Cf. X. 7563 (1551A),
 X. 7570 (1551D).
- VI. 30120 (1641) diis fretus . . . fatorum inmetuens.
- V. 3034 (199) illi deos iratos, quos om(n)is colunt,
 si quis de (e)o sepulcro (quid) uiola(ue)rit.
- V. 5049 (417) set sanctus deus hic felicius i[lla
 transtulit in melius.
- V. 6128 (473) praecipitem memet superi mersere sub aulas.
- I. 1306, IX. 4933 (54) nesci[o qui i]nueidit deus.
- IX. 4810 (1305) et sic me miseram destituere dei.
 narrabam Lethen defunctorumq[ue] quietem :
 nil mihi Lethaei profuit a[m]nis aqua.
- X. 5958 (596) quam] mihi di dederant, si [non ta]men inuidi fuissent.
- XI. 3963 (591) et fruitur superis aeterna in luce Fabatus.
- XIV. 1731 (80) Aceruam Ditis rapuit infantem domus
 pulcram decoram, quasi delictum celitu.
- II. 1399 (1140) qui sidera torquent.
- III. 406 (432) uota supervacua fletusque et numina diu
 naturae leges fatorumque arguit ordo.
 spreuisti patrem matremque, miserrime nate,
 Elysios campos habitans et prata ueatum.
- III. 2197 (1534A). 2. vimque tulisse deum. 5. testor superos.
 (1534B) in inferi Ditis specus.
- III. 2964 (1141) incusatque deos.
- VIII. 2756 (1604) cuius admissi uel Manes uel di caelestes [e]runt
 sceleris uindices.
- VIII. 11824 (1238) Iouis arua.
- VIII. 13134 (1606) sed ago superis gratias.
- VIII. 15569 (525) profuit en tibi, quot fana coluisti deorum.
- XII. 533 (465) floribus intextis refouent simulacra deorum.

XII. 3619 (579) uendere ne liceat caueo adque rogo per numina diuom.

b. From epitaphs in prose.

VI. 2335 di uos bene faciant, amici, et uos, uiatores, habeatis deos propitios.

Cf. VI. 26554, XI. 1286, XIV. 439.

VI. 15454 apud superos et inferos malidictionem habeo.

VI. 19716 quem di amauerunt.

VI. 27227 o di superi et inferi.

VI. 29195 anima bona superis reddita raptus a nymphis.

V. 3466 in Nemese ne fidem habeatis.

V. 6535 fecit pater eius deorum ira oppressus ruinae suae memoriam.

IX. 5813 quod inpricabo superos et inferos.

X. 2875 sei fieri potuisset aeternam incolumit(atem) Musae donassent.

XIV. 2055 dis iniquis nata.

III. 3989 uos itaque inferi, ad quos me praecipitem di superi cogerunt, admittite.

III. 9451 quot si di aequi fuissent.

XIII. 1986 omnium numinum frustra cultoris qui hac aetate obit.

VI. 5886 rogo per deos superos inferosque ni uelit ossa mea uiolare.

VI. 13740 habeat deos et iratos.

Cf. VI. 13921, VI. 18281, VI. 19873, VIII. 11825, X. 2875, XIV. 2535.

Several of the epitaphs relating to the Vestal Virgins contain references to the gods, as we should naturally expect; but these do not emanate from the common people and cannot be considered as illustrating its sentiments. See VI. 2134, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2143.

III. The gods and regions of the lower world.

VI. 6314 (1014) Pluton inuidis eripuit.

VI. 6592 (1031) deuouet inuisi noxsia regna dei.

VI. 6986 (1034). 3. Manes rapuissent Ditis auari.

5. rapuisset Cerberus.

- VI. 7872 (971) crudelis Pluton, nimio saeuite rapinae,
parce precor nostram iam lacerare domum.
- VI. 10971 (442) quem genuit genetrix secum tenet in lare Ditis.
- VI. 17050 (1301). 3. Persephone uotis inuidit pallida nostris.
8. Lethaeo sarcophago.
- VI. 23295 (393) Elysios precor ut possis inuadere campos,
matronamque colas Ditis Di[tem] que preceris.
- VI. 25128 (1223) Omnes] aequae rapit Ditis acerba manus
et uos pe]r Stygias portabit portitor unda [s.
- VI. 25871 (1219) cum me florentem rapuit sibi Ditis ad umbras.
- VI. 27060 (1161) liminibus rapuit me sibi Persephone.
Cf. VI. 28047 (1128), VIII. 9690 (527).
- IX. 1837 (960) nunc data sum Diti longum mansura per aeuum
deducta et fatali igne et aqua Stygia.
- IX. 3409 (136) Aeternam ad Ditem uiuos effecit domum.
Cf. III. 6443 (540), III. 8739 (1148).
- X. 7569 (1551C). 3. et prior at Lethen cum sit Pempti[ll]a recepta.
5. nunc aeterna quies Ditisq. silentia maesti.
- XI. 627 (513) ut me infern(as) Stygias Dis pater accipia[t].
- XI. 1209 (1550B). 5. infelix Stygio u[olt] uitam dedere regi.
7. sede] Elysia. 9. Hennaecae rapinae.
- VI. 7886 (1143) Elysiis campis floreat umbra tibi.
- VI. 10097 (1111) fusus in Elysia sic ego ualle moror.
- VI. 21846 (1165) umbrarum secunda quies animaeq. pior(um)
laudate colitis quae loca sancta Erebi,
sedes insontem Magnillam ducite uestras
per nemora et campos protinus Elysios.
Cf. IX. 3968 (498), X. 6785 (1189), III. 1759 (1311), III. 1992
(1465), III. 3397 (555), III. 6414 (588), VIII. 13110 (1188).
- VI. 16653 (549) compositum tumulo semper sub Tartara uiuunt.
- VI. 19007 (562) eripuit letus teneramque ad Tartara duxit.
Cf. IX. 2078 (1386), X. 5631 (1631), III. 2628 (456), VIII. 2803
(576 B), VIII. 11597 (1515), XIII. 2315 (646).
- IX. 3071 (1212) crudeles diui, Stygias quicumque paludes incolitis.
Cf. VI. 6182 (1150), XI. 1881 (1757), XIII. 2104 (1278).
- VI. 18086 (1581) talis enim sensus erat illi quasi properantis ad Orcum.
- VI. 20070 Orcus eripuit mihi, in quo spes. Cf. XII. 5272 (1202).

VI. 10764 (1535) set non hic Manis nec templa Acherusia uisit.

Cf. X. 8131 (428), VII. 250 (395).

VI. 11252 (1567) ne metuas Lethen.

VI. 25703 (1537) et raptam inferna me posuere rate.

IX. 3337 (1265) at Styga perpetua uel rate funerea
utinam tecu(m) comitata fuisse(m).

VIII. 12792 (1187) duceris ad Stygiam nunc miseranda ratem,
inque tuo tristis uersatur pectore Lethe.

VI. 5953 (1068) nunc rapior tenebris.

VI. 6976 (1033) infernis sub umbris.

VI. 21151 (398) quae caruit luce et tenebris se miscuit atris.

VI. 24049 (1041) desine per terras infernas tendere ad arces.

Cf. VI. 28239 (447), III. 6383 (1147).

VI. 1537 mater, que uidit funus suum crudelissimum, que si deum
propitium habuisse(m), hoc debuera(m) ab eos pati.

For the meaning of *deum*, cf. VI. 25063 (1549) flebile (= flebili)
mersa deo.

IV. Personification of *terra*, *tellus*, and *humus*.¹

VI. 6319 (1066) inmatura sinu tellus leuis accipe Grati ossa.

VI. 6986 (1034) et cineres nostros ima foueret humus.

VI. 8703 (1028) opto, si qua fides remanet telluris amicae
sit tibi perpetuo terra leuis tumulo.

VI. 9632 (89) amica tellus ut det hospitium ossibus.

VI. 10006 (1133) mater terra tegit.

IX. 3184 (1313) terraq. quae mater nunc est, sibi sit leuis oro.

Cf. VI. 21674 (1579), XI. 973a (1108), XII. 1932 (1476).

VI. 13528 (1559) Bassa uatis quae Laberi coniuga hoc alto sinu
frugeae matris quiescit.

VI. 15493 (1129) quae genuit tellus, ossa teget tumulo.

VI. 18149 (1217) diua, precor, tellus aeuo complectere sancta.

VI. 18579 (1039) terra parens, tibi Fortunatae commissimus ossa,
quae tangis matres proximitate tuos.

V. 3653 (1043) te, tellus, sanctosque precor, pro coniugis Manes.

¹ I have preferred to write such words as *terra*, *fatus*, *fortuna*, without a capital even when the idea of personification seems to be present in the mind of the writer.

- V. 7454 (809) mater genuit materq. recepit.
X. 633 (1308) illius cineres aurea terra tegat.
XI. 8131 (428) in his iaceo telluris sedibus atrae.
X. 5469 (1135) componimur ossa
grata magis terrae quam tibe, dure lapis.
III. 4487 (1121) felix terra, precor, leuiter, super ossa residas.
5. co]mprecor ut uobis sit pia terra leuis.
VI. 12087 (611).
Cf. VI. 12087 (611), II. 1504 (1138).
VIII. 352 (1239) terra tegit felix.
Cf. VIII. 7604 (1613), VIII. 9473 (1153).
VIII. 2035 (469) mater pingit humus.

In the following epitaphs the personification is less marked.

- I. 33, VI. 1288 (8); VI. 12087 (611), VI. 21975 (67), VI. 24807 (1029), IX. 6417 (1131), III. 3247 (1207), III. 9418 (1141).

In examining this first list, which includes references by name to the deities of the upper world, it is worthy of note that these quotations are all derived from the poetic epitaphs, and that not one of these names occurs in those in prose. It is a matter, too, of surprise that out of some 1300 poetic epitaphs only 32 contain direct references to the deities, and but few of these references are to the chief gods recognized in the state religion. As may be readily perceived from the quotations, the introduction of these names does not imply belief in the mind of the writer in the existence of these deities. The names of gods are merely employed for poetic adornment. They accordingly occur most frequently in those epitaphs which are pretentious in form and sentiment. Those who composed the epitaphs in which these references most abound are not representatives of the common people and of their sentiments, but are either men of the upper class, as may be seen from the first inscriptions quoted, or are such as are ambitious to adorn the tombs of the dead with high-sounding poetic phrases borrowed from the commonplaces of Roman poetry.

The second list contains the more general and indefinite references to the gods. It includes 37 poetic epitaphs and 24 in prose, exclusive of those relating to the Vestal Virgins. As in the first list these references to the gods which occur in the poetic epitaphs are chiefly employed as the mere adornments of poetic diction. In one or two exceptional expressions, however, we may perhaps detect some faith in the gods, as VI. 30120 (1641) *diis fretus . . . fatorum inmetuens*, and VIII. 15569 *profuit en tibi, quot fana coluisti deorum*. VI. 1779 (111) affords a still more marked example of an apparently genuine belief in the gods of Rome, but this is the epitaph of an augur and pontiff of Vesta. We may notice that in most of the prose epitaphs the gods are referred to merely in formulas of imprecation or prayer. These fixed phrases would imply belief rather on the part of those who first employed them than of those who used them after they had become a mere form of speech. The use of such oft-recurring expressions as *rogo per deos superos inferosque* or *di uos bene faciant* does not imply more genuine belief on the part of those who made use of them than does such an expression as *at omnes di exagitant me* imply belief in the gods on the part of Horace.

I briefly refer to three epitaphs which might be expected to be included in these lists. In XIII. 2602 we meet the expression: *uicturi quam diu deus dederit ponendum curauerunt*. Canat, whose view is adopted by the editors of this volume of the *C.I.L.*, recognized this expression as one which reflects Christian sentiment. Such a use of the word *deus* in an epitaph which, in other respects, bears the marks of being the work of a pagan, is explained by the assumption that the wife to whom the epitaph is inscribed may have been a Christian, while the husband who composed it remained a pagan.

VI. 30103 (190) contains a reference to *Bacchus* and to *deus*. The *C.I.L.* includes this among the genuine inscriptions, but Bücheler doubts its claims to antiquity owing to line 6: *et nos antiquorum emitemur tempora*. To my mind a far stronger argument against its authenticity is to be found

in the last sentence. After an exhortation in the Epicurean spirit to enjoy life this supposed epitaph closes with the lines :

uiue dum uiuis, nec quidquam denegaueris
animo indulgere, quem commodauit deus.

Neither this sentiment nor this form of expression could originate from an ancient pagan or an early Christian.

An especially perplexing inscription is VI. 7578 (422), which belongs to the year A.D. 127. The epitaph contains nineteen lines, and relates to a boy who died at the age of seven. In the first seventeen lines the boy is represented as speaking. The last two lines, which are not closely connected in thought with what precedes, are as follows :

tu reddas aeterne piis solacia semper
et uitam serues cunctis generisque piorum.

A note in the *C.I.L.* on *aeterne* is merely to the following effect: "adloquitur deum." It is not, however, a pagan sentiment to address the eternal power or an eternal power in this general way where no special mention of a deity has preceded to which the word may refer. If the reference to *deus* in XIII. 2602 cannot be regarded as pagan, much less can we allow *aeterne* here to be a pagan reference to the deity. On the other hand, the sentiment of these two lines is not fully in accord with early Christian feeling, and I do not think that the theory has been advanced or is tenable that these lines indicate Christian influence.

It seems to me that these last lines are not to be taken as a continuation of the words addressed by the boy to those whom he leaves behind on earth, but as a parting prayer directed to him. Such a change of speaker is not uncommon in the sepulchral inscriptions. In VI. 27728 (1538) the first part is addressed by the surviving brother to the one who has died, while the last two lines represent the dead as speaking. If it seems that the change of speakers is unusually abrupt, we may note that this is not the only respect in which the poem is not faultless. The first part bears evidence of interpolation, as lines eight and nine are

too long for hexameter verse. The *generis* of the last line is an awkward construction at best, and it has been emended to read as a dative singular or as an accusative plural. It seems to me not improbable that the last two lines were an addition from a different source, not found in the original poem which was followed in the first seventeen lines.

The *aeterne* I would take as an adverb, and this is the view of Meyer (*Anthologia Latina*, 1615). The *semper* which follows may seem to be an objection to this interpretation, but such tautology is not uncommon in the language of the epitaphs, and it is frequently met with also in the language of Plautus. The departed is thus besought to render consolation eternally to the pious. In a similar spirit the husband bids farewell to his wife, who is to remain his eternal consolation. V. 3496 *aeternum meum uale solacium*. It does not, however, affect the general interpretation which I have given to these lines whether *aeterne* is regarded as an adverb or as a vocative. *Aeterne* may be applied to the deified spirit of the dead, just as *deus* is not infrequently so used in the epitaphs.

The prayer in the last line that the departed may preserve the life of all reminds us that the dead were thought to have a certain influence and power over the lives of those who survived them. The spirit of this line is not essentially different from that of VI. 30102 (1508), in which the husband appeals to his departed wife to spare his life for many years.

parcas, oro, uiro, puella, parcas,
ut possit tibi plurimos per annos
cum sertis dare iusta quae dicauit,
et semper uigilet lucerna nardo.

Compare also the closing words of VI. 4825 (1020) *parcito et ipse tuos*. For other illustrations of this belief we may refer to VI. 19874 (1224), VI. 24520 (1057), VI. 29950, IX. 6315 (383), XIV. 3945 (366).

The third list contains references to the mythological beings and to the regions of the lower world. It includes 58 inscriptions which, with two exceptions, are in prose.

Twenty-three of those quoted in lists I. and II. also include similar references. Here again the language is merely poetic and figurative. Pluto and Proserpine are but the personification of death, and the epithets which are applied to them are such as we find applied to the abstract terms used to denote death. Elysium is mentioned some twenty times, Styx fourteen, Tartarus nine, Lethe six, Acheron five, Orcus three. The boatman of the lower world is mentioned three times as Charon, Porthmeus, portitor. His boat is referred to six times. We also have one reference to each of the following: Hecate, Minos, Cerberus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, Ixion, and the Furies.

None of these epitaphs, whether in poetry or prose, contains any epithets or expressions which imply affection for the deities mentioned; but the mention of mother earth, on the other hand, often awakens in the hearts of the people a real affection and unfeigned sympathy. There is a genuine touch of pathos in the following:

VI. 18579 (1039)

terra parens, tibi Fortunatae commisimus ossa
quae tangis matres proxumitate tuos.

The epithets applied are *amica*, *pia*, *felix*, *fecunda*, *frugea*, *aurca*.

Even mother earth does not seem to be thought of as a definite personality with a definite name. The names *tellus* and *humus* are used as well as *terra*. This conception of the earth as the mother who produces all life, and who again receives back her children at death into her bosom, is the outgrowth of the generally accepted belief of the Roman people that the life of man belongs to this earth, and that there is no personal immortality beyond the grave.

This simple conception of earth which prevailed so generally among the common people often reappears in Roman literature. The *grata humus* seems to me to be used in this simple, natural way in the following lines of Propertius (5, 11, 100):

Causa peroratast. flentes me surgite, testes,
dum pretium uitae grata rependit humus.

I cannot accept Maass's interpretation of these words. He says (Orpheus 222): "*grata humus* ist für *grati inferi* (die gewogenen Unterirdischen) gesagt."

The love of nature and appreciation of its beauties, which form a distinguishing characteristic of Roman literature in contrast to all the other literatures of antiquity, are the outgrowth of this feeling of kinship which the Italians entertained for mother earth.

In striking contrast to the small number of references to the gods of Rome to be found in the epitaphs appears the frequent use of words which imply that the life of man is not guided by divine beings but is controlled only by an irresistible force. A variety of words and expressions is used to indicate this power, but the fundamental idea is the same in the case of all. The words which most frequently occur are *fatum*, *fatalis*, *Parcae*, *sorores*, *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, *Atropos*, *fortuna*, *fors*, and *sors*. I shall consider first *fatum* and *fatalis*. These words were the most abstract of this entire group and they were the ones which were employed with the greatest frequency. In the poetic inscriptions I have noted 242 and in the prose 28 illustrations of their use. In the majority of these cases the most prominent and the essential idea is that fate is the ruthless power which causes an early and a premature death. Illustrations of this usage may be found in all periods represented by the epitaphs, and in all parts of the Roman empire. I have noted upwards of two hundred illustrations of this usage, but I subjoin only a few examples.

I. 1009, VI. 10096 (55) *properavit hora tristis fatalis mea*.

VI. 25703 (1537) *properavit aetas, uoluit hoc fatus meus*.

VI. 15897 (459), 26680 (1173), 28523 (1540).

Life appeared to the majority of those whose ideas are revealed to us in the sepulchral inscriptions as a period of natural growth and decay, bounded by birth and the grave. If this full period of life was uninterrupted, they felt that nature had completed its work and that death had come in the natural course of events to man as it came to all things.

This thought is brought out emphatically in the epitaphs as in VI. 11252 (1567) *mors etenim hominum natura, non poena est*. They considered that under these circumstances death was a normal, necessary, and natural occurrence and that there was no just ground for complaint or for bitter grief. It was only when this natural life was cut short that they poured out those pathetic wails of sorrow which bear the stamp of sincerity. This apparent violation of the laws of nature, to them so mysterious and so sad, they attributed to the blind caprice and cruel will of fate. This victory of fate over nature is often referred to in such expressions as the following :

I. 1202, X. 4362 (362) *eheu heu Taracei, ut acerbo es deditus fato. non aeuo exacto uitai es traditus morti.*

III. 11281 (1565) *ante quidem tempus fata rapuerunt mala.*

VI. 15897 (459) *inclementa [negant] eius currentia fata.*

Cf. III. 6475 (1310), X. 5429 (1144), VI. 16059 (175).

VI. 29629 (1067) *vixi dum fata sinebant.*

III. 4483 (1082) *uixi ego dum licuit dulciter ad superos.*

III. 2835 (992) *uixi quad potui semper bene pauper honeste.*

Cf. IX. 1764 (76), VI. 16169 (85).

The death of those who have lived the full term of life is accordingly attributed to nature rather than to fate as in the following :

VI. 21975 (67) *itaque quoad aetatem uolui exsegi meam.*

VI. 3580 *debitum naturae persoluit.*

In a similar spirit is the following brief epitaph :

VIII. 10775 C. Co. *Primus vixit an. LXXV.*

suo leto, suis meritis mortuus.

Mommsen's explanation of these words is as follows : "*Id est uitam finiuit quando et qualem fata voluerunt.*" The thought, however, in the mind of the writer seems to have been that Primus has lived seventy-five years up to the natural time of death rather than that he has died in accordance with fate.

There are comparatively few cases in which fate seems entirely dissociated from an early death and in which it is regarded as the power determining the length of life and appointing the time of death. In VI. 25427 (1142) we find the words *postquam fatis morientia lumina soluit* applied to one who died *annis plenus*.

IX. 3473 (186) hunc titulum nobis posuimus uiuis, ut possemus at superos securius uitam bonam ger(e)re, qua fini fata uolebant.

V. 3143 (1120) debita cum fatis uenerit hora tribus.

VI. 20513 uolente fato uixit annis LXXXII.

XII. 5271 (1021) mortua cum fueris, fati quod lege necessest.

From the frequent use of *fatum* as the power which determined the length of life and assigned the time of death, especially in the case of those dying in youth, this term came to be used for death and especially the death of the young. It was thus merely a synonym for *mors* or *letum*.

VI. 5534 (1035) causa latet fati.

VI. 6502 (1001) Plocami lugere sepulti fata.

VI. 25531 (1106) post sua fata.

VI. 25871 (1219) cito reddite fatis.

VI. 28044 (1575) raptus qui est subito, quo fato, non scitur.

VI. 28941 (96) fata non parcunt bonis.

VI. 29629 (1067) inmatura meo perlege fata loco.

I. 1422, IX. 5557 (69) quouis fatum acerbum populus indigne tulit.

III. 9733 (77) dum fatum venit.

I. 1202, X. 4362 (362), III. 1552 (460), VIII. 4071 (433).

While the idea of destiny is more or less clearly involved in the passages above cited, yet in the following it is the most prominent conception, and the idea of death is subordinate to this.

VI. 3608 (475) quod si fata mihi dedissent luce videre.

VI. 9604 (1253) dubias fatorum clades.

VI. 12009 (1218) perfuncti fato hic tenere locum.

VI. 22251 (1127) si pietate aliquem redimi fatale fuisset.

V. 4905 (982) cum in patria(m) tulerit te dextera fati.

V. 7453 (1578) si potuisset uincere fata.

X. 126 cuius si fata fuissent. (scil. aequa.)

III. 3241 (1208) dum mea fata resistant.

VIII. 12792 (1187) fatum fuit ut Libys esses.

XII. 533, B) fati non uincitur ordo.

Just as *fatum* came to mean death from the fact that it was regarded as the power which fixed the time of death, so from the idea that it was the one controlling force in life the word was used to denote the entire life of man and was even employed as synonymous with *uita*.

VI. 17342 (1049) finitum Euhodiae fatum.

VI. 26901 (172) fati peractis,

IX. 1817 (1055) finem fati conqueror ipsa mei.

IX. 3279 (1183) reddere te fati, Ephire, si pos[se] liceret].

III. 3146 (1160) sed legem fati Parcae dixere cruentam.

III. 9106 (1156) Parcae crudeles, nimium properastis rumpere fata mea.

III. 9314 (1205) paucis perlege fata mea.

Especially suggestive is the use of *fatales* as equivalent to *mortales*.

XIV. 2553 (1032) fatales moneo, ne quis me lugeat.

With this we may compare XI. 2329 (506) *si fortuna quidem fati non laeva fuisset*. Here *fati* is almost synonymous with *filio* to whom the epitaph is inscribed. Similar also is the following: VI. 12652 (995) *fataque maerendo sollicitare mea*.

When any of this group of words is used to denote fate, the personal idea rarely seems to be present to the mind of the writer, yet in a few cases the form of the language employed is such as might have been applied to divine beings. Even in these cases we seem to have rather the personification of fate than any conception of the fates as goddesses. Examples of such usage are as follows:

occurs in the previous line. Bücheler, the latest commentator, seems to favor this interpretation. His note in *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*, page 237, is as follows: "*benigna* fortasse errore lapicidae iteratum, fortasse imitatione certi carminis (*fati benigni* Iuu. 16, 4), fortasse adfectione philosopha. nam lugenti marito magis conueniebat *severa* quod Boissardus dedit, *sinistra*, *maligna*." He seems to feel that even if the word *benigna* be accepted as the original reading, still the expression is not in harmony with the feelings of the bereaved husband nor in conformity with the general spirit of the inscriptions.

It is, however, to be observed that it is only in connection with a premature death that fate is regarded as cruel and envious. If the word *fata* is used at all in the case of the death of others, usually no epithet is added. For example:

V. 3143 (1120) debita cum fatis uenerit hora tribus.

VIII. 12103 (524) functus fati co[*lis*] uita felix de luce recessi.

The following epitaphs show that the fates might under some circumstances be thought of as kindly disposed.

IX. 3071 (1212) ut superi pia fata tulissent.

The wife who has raised a monument to her husband says:
XIII. 2016 quod ille mi debuit facere, si fata bona fuissent.

Of one who has lived a long and a useful life it is said:

X. 6785 (1189) huic non dura colu Clotho decrevit.

X. 3336 fato bono.

We meet too with such expressions as:

VI. 20513 volente fato vixit annis LXXXII.

XI. 137 (1580) qui dum factus civis R. iuuenta fato colocauit arkam.

VI. 24049 (1041) fata animam dederant fata eademq. negant.

We meet too in dedicatory inscriptions such expressions as the following:

V. 8802 dis diab(us) fatalibus conseru(atoribus).

But an essential point and one which has apparently been overlooked by commentators is that the *fata* here refer to the fates which shall unite in death the husband to his wife rather than to those who have taken away the wife; and yet in the latter case we find the wife is sometimes represented as preferring to die before her husband.

VI. 9792 praecedere uoluisti, sanctissima coix.

The epitaphs often speak of the bereaved husband's desire to join his wife in the grave. Death under these circumstances is often pictured as preferable to life.

VI. 7579 aut et me reddite coniugi meae.

Entirely in harmony with the spirit of the inscription under consideration is one in which the husband inscribes on the tomb of his wife :

XIII. 2205 utinam nos fatus texisset utrosque.

The epithet *benignus* might, with propriety, have been added here to *fatus*; but an adjective like *severus*, *sinister*, or *malignus*, such as has been suggested as an emendation for *benignus* in VI. 19055, would be equally out of place in both epitaphs. We may accordingly conclude that the epithet *benigna* is in full accord with the general spirit of the views of the people on life and death as reflected in their epitaphs.

It is interesting to observe the different forms in which the word *fatum* is used. I have noted 225 illustrations of its use in poetic epitaphs and 28 in prose. *Fatus* occurs 20 times in poetical epitaphs and 3 times in prose. *Fatum* is once used in the masculine accusative as is shown by *felicem* VI. 30119. The feminine is found in the entire *C.I.L.* three times in the plural: *fate* (= *fatae*) II. 89, and *fatabus* V. 4209, 5005. These are the only forms which we can be sure are either masculine or feminine.

Fatum occurs 24 times; *fati*, in the gen. sing., 27 times; *fato* 37 times; *fata* 100 times; *fatorum* 18 times; *fatis* 22 times.

The usage here noted throws some light on the interpretation of *fati* in VI. 29436 (1159).

Ummidiai manes tumulus tegit iste simulque
 Primigeni uernae, quos tulit una dies.
 nam Capitolinae compressi examine turbae
 supremum fati competiere diem.

Bücheler compares this epitaph with X. 1920 (464) *fata suum petiere diem*. He would thus take *fati* in the nominative plural. As the form *fati* is not elsewhere found in the epitaphs as a nominative plural, but is frequently used as a genitive singular, it is more reasonable to consider this case as conforming to the common usage of the word. It seems an unnatural and forced interpretation to take *fati* as the subject. In this case the figure is a bolder and more elaborate one than we find elsewhere applied to fate. Taking *fati* in the genitive, the expression is a simple and a natural one, and is not unlike such expressions as *fatorum tempora*, *fatalem diem*, *finem fati mei*. The verb *competiere* is far more naturally applied to the two who have met death together than to the fates. We should rather compare this inscription to one which furnishes a striking parallel :

IX. 5140 hi duo conuenti una fata secuti.

In the language of the people the word *fatum* was employed in such a general and vague way that it was not well adapted to personification and the requirements of poetic language. Other words were accordingly used to give a more objective expression to the idea of destiny. Such words were *Parcae*, *sorores*, *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, *Atropos*, *fortuna*, *fors*, *sors*. We frequently find *Parcae* used in connection with *fata* to bring out more concretely the idea which is merely suggested by the more abstract term.

VI. 10969 (443) parce oculis nec nostra uelis cognoscere fata,
 sanguinea palla quae texit prodiga Clotho
 et fuit rupisse suas quoque fila sorores
 luctifica properante manu.

- I. 1008, VI. 25369 (59) quoi fatum graue
 infestae] Parcae ac finem uitae statuerunt.
- III. 3146 (1160) sed legem fati Parcae dixere cruentam.
- III. 9106 (1156) Parcae crudeles, nimium properastis rumpere fata
 mea.
- VIII. 21269 (1552) fati certa uia est neque se per stamina mutat
 Atropos.

I subjoin a list of other passages in which there is a direct reference to the Parcae.

- VI. 7578 (422) inuidit Lachesis, Clotho me saeua necauit
 tertia nec passa est pietate rependere matri.
- I. 1009, VI. 10096 (55) en hoc in tumultu cinerem nostri corporis
 infestae Parcae deposierunt carmine.
- VI. 10226 (1119) Parcae nam inpubem quem rapuere mihi.
- VI. 10493 (1122) in] uida bis denos Lachesis concesserat annos :
 nondum alio pleno quod dederat rapuit.
- VI. 11407 (1222) i]nuida nascenti Lachesis fuit, inuida Cloto.
- VI. 11624 (494) cuius furibundae ruperunt fila sorores.
- VI. 20674 (436) sic etenim duxere olim primordia Parcae
 et neuere super nobis uitalia fila.
- VI. 21521 (1109) Parcarum putria fila querens
 et gemerem tristi damnatam sorte iuuentam.
- VI. 25063 (1549) 5. adiecit Chloto iteratum rumpere filum,
 ut natum raperet tristis, ut ante, mihi.
 17. stamina ruperunt subito tua candida Parcae
 apstuleruntque simul uota precesque mihi.
- VI. 25617 (965) supremum Parcae sorte dedere mihi.
- VI. 28047 (1128) dispar damna lege Parcae [u]m et stamina dispar.
- VI. 29426 (1164) inuida quem tenerum Parca tenax rapuit.
- VI. 30114 (1114) cum mea Lethaeae ruperunt fila sorores.
- VI. 30121 (401) sper]aui uisere Parcas.
- IX. 60 (1533) terminus hic est,
 quem mihi nascenti quondam Parcae cecinerunt.
- IX. 2272 (1523) ipso mihi flore iuuentae
 ruperunt fila sorores.
- X. 5429 (1144) tempus uicturo mihi longum stamine Parcae
 aetatis nostrae [p]r[aerip]uit[que c]olu.

- X. 5665 (378) heu nimium celeres in funere Parcae.
 X. 6785 (1189) huic non dura colu Clotho decreuit.
 X. 8131 (428) a male Parcarum dura de lege sororum raptus.
 XI. 1209 (1550) erubuit nostras Atropos ipsa colus.
 XIV. 2709 (1248) quod si mutari potuissent fila sororum.
 II. 3871 (978) Parcae falluntur, Fontanum quae rapuerunt
 cum sit perpetuo fama futura uiri.
 III. 2183 (822) quod si longa magis nexissent stamina Parcae.
 III. 2341 (1204) crudeles Parcae nimium.
 III. 2964 (1141) 13. hanc Atropos rapuit Lachesisq. et tertia Clotho.
 15. incusat denique Parcas.
 III. 2628 (456) quod si longa magis duxissent fila sorores.
 III. 6384 (1206) inuida Parcarum series liuorque malignus
 bis septena mea ruperunt stamina lucis.
 III. 9623 (627) cunctis fila parant et Parce nec parcetur ullis.
 VIII. 724 (1612) Parcae quos tribuerent,
 ter quinos bis singulos peregi annos.
 VIII. 8870 (501) ni Lachesis breuia rupisset stamina fuso,
 pro dolor, ut nulli decreta rumpere fas est
 Parcarum diua duosque euadere casus.
 VIII. 646 in annis uiginti duobus quos Parcae praeфинierant edito.
 Cf. VI. 7898 (1058), X. 7968 (1701), III. 8847 (1666), VIII. 9142
 (472).

We thus find the Parcae mentioned in forty-one epitaphs, all of which are in poetic form unless we except VIII. 646, which is poetic in tone and is classed by I. Cholodniak (*Carmina Sepulcralia Latina*) as iambic verse. The epitaphs in which these expressions occur are as a rule more ambitious in form than those which employ the word *fata* to express destiny. Still, the views of life and death which underlie them are the same. Destiny is here depicted under the image of the Parcae as decreeing death, especially the death of the young, as immutable, cruel, and hostile to man. The Parcae are referred to in all these epitaphs as the cause of premature death, except in the two following cases: VIII. 212, X. 6785.

The epithets are similar to those which we noted in connec-

tion with *fata*, i.e. *invida, crudeles, infestae, tristis, dura, tenax, celeres, furibundae, prodiga* (scil. *scelerum*).

Sometimes the Parcae are conceived as goddesses of death and are thought of as residing in the lower world. In VI. 30114 (1114) they are called the *Lethaeae sorores*. In III. 2341 (1204) they are called *infernae*. In VI. 30121 (401) we meet with the expression *vissere Parcas*. Here *Parcas* is synonymous with the lower world.

In VI. 12307 (1050) we meet with an unusual expression in regard to fate :

sed quoniam dirae genuerunt fata uolucres,
te, Basse, ereptum fleuimus ante rogam.

This passage has been variously amended, but not in a satisfactory way. In fact, it does not seem to need emendation. The term *dirae uolucres* was evidently suggested by Vergil (*Aen.* III. 262) and Bücheler quotes this passage in connection with the epitaph. It would not seem altogether strange that one who was acquainted with Greek mythology should speak of the Harpies as causing death. They are not infrequently represented as goddesses of death both in Greek literature and in Greek art. In Aesch. *Eumen.* 50 they are spoken of as closely related to the Erinyes, and Vergil uses the expression of the Harpy Celaeno "furiarum ego maxima." Judging, however, from the somewhat confused method of thought and the unskilful use of language displayed in the rest of the epitaph, the writer does not appear to have been one who would have been quick to throw aside popular ideas of death and to adopt those of Greek mythology even though reflected in so popular a poet as Vergil. While the epitaphs show abundant evidence of the popularity of Vergil among the common people and while there are numerous illustrations of the influence of his poems on the language of the epitaphs, there is almost no evidence that his conceptions of death affected their beliefs. It is accordingly more natural to suppose that the writer simply availed himself of the language of Vergil to embody the prevailing conceptions of death. In the popular mind the prophecy of evil was often

identified with the evil itself. The prophet was thought of as causing the evil which he foretold. Thus, in Homer, we have the expression, *Iliad* I. 108:

ἔσθλὸν δ' οὔτε τί πω εἶπας ἔπος, οὔτ' ἐτέλεσσας.

The simple conceptions of life and death as embodied in Homer far better reflect the plane of thought on which the common people of Rome stood than do the writings of Vergil or any of the other poets of Rome, representing as they do the refinements of culture in which the populace had no share. The Parcae were not only thought of as determining destiny by spinning the thread of life, but they were also represented as those who prophesied.

IX. 60 (1533) terminus hic est,
quem mihi nascenti quondam Parcae cecinere.

Cf. VI. 29426 (1164), III. 3146 (1160), VIII. 16566 (1332). In a spirit similar to that which we observed in the expression of Homer are the two following epitaphs, in which the evil and the prophecy of evil seem to be almost identified in the minds of the writers.

I. 1009, VI. 10096 (55)
en hoc in tumulo cinerem nostri corporis
infistae Parcae deposierunt carmine.

III. 2964 (1141) incusat denique Parcas
quae uitam pensant quaeque futura canunt.

The conception of the Parcae as cruel goddesses who prophesied the greatest misfortune which could befall mortals, *i.e.* the death of the young, might naturally suggest to the unskilful but ambitious poet the idea of applying to them the expression used of the most prominent evil prophets which appear in Latin literature. If the writer had had the Harpies in mind as those who caused the death, he would not have ventured to speak of them so vaguely and indefinitely when this conception, as far as we can judge from the large number of the sepulchral inscriptions, was entirely

foreign to the mind of the common people. That he should have attempted to give variety to the expression by employing a new phrase to express a conception which was in the mind of every one and which had already appeared in various forms in the language of the epitaphs, was natural on the part of one who shows throughout the poem a desire to put the well-worn common sentiments in regard to death in a new and striking form.

Destiny and fate are also personified under the name of *fortuna*. Her sphere of action is more varied than that of *fata* or the Parcae. In the following epitaphs, however, *fortuna* seems but another designation of the same power which we have met in the case of *fata* and the Parcae.

VI. 10969 (443) placet hoc, fortuna, sepulchrum?

VI. 10971 (442) o fortuna, fidem quantam mutasti maligne.

VI. 20128 (1065) atrox o fortuna, truci quae funere gaudes,
quid mihi tam subito Maximus eripitur?

V. 6808 (63) queror fortunae cassum tam iniquom et graue[m].

X. 5495 (376) si fortuna pie seruasset uota parentum.

XI. 531 (1170), XI. 2329 (506), II. 3475 (980), III. 729 (1485),
III. 2628 (456), III. 6416 (82), VIII. 9048 (1610), VIII.
10828 (110), VIII. 18792 (1788), VI. 16709.

In the following epitaphs *fortuna* is still regarded as the power which determines the length of life.

I. 1019, VI. 30105 (68) spe amissa uoluit me fortuna heic retine(re),
quoniam me fortuna iniqua non siuit frui,
nihil timeo nec confido.

V. 6693 (610) sic fortuna tibi dederat transcurrere uitam.

XIV. 316 (1105) et quem mi dederat cursum fortuna peregit.

II. 4315 (500) fortunam metuant omnes.

VIII. 9170 (515) iam requiem sumimus, ubi nos fortuna remisit.

XII. 287 (814) quem dederat cursum fort[una] peregi.

Fortuna is represented also as the power which shapes the life of man and which sends prosperity. Her name is often

associated with *spes*. Her abode is in the upper world, and she is the goddess of the living whom the dying leave behind.

VI. 11743 (1498) *Euasi effugi. spes et fortuna ualete.*

VI. 14211 (964) *dextera fama mihi fuit et fortuna.*

VI. 15225 (204) *si pro uirtute et animo fortunam habuissem.*

I. 1010, VI. 24563 (185) *fortuna spondet multa multis, praestat nemini.*

VI. 28239 (447) *uiuete felices superi quorum fortuna beatast.*

I. 1019, VI. 30105 (68) *uixi et fortunam, quoad uixi, toli.*

VIII. 8567 (569) *gaudia que dederat rapuit fortuna repente.*

VIII. 12792 (1187) *munus erat, fortuna, tuum seruare pudicam.*

VI. 9693 (1136), VI. 15225 (204), I. 1010, VI. 19175 (185), V. 3415 (1095), V. 5930 (1589), IX. 60 (1533), IX. 4756 (409), III. 1854 (1117), VIII. 11828 (99), VIII. 11883 (530).

To the writers of the epitaphs fate seldom appears as a fixed law of nature, as to the Stoic, or as a predetermined order of events, as to Vergil, but rather as a blind necessity depending on chance and not on law. The most marked exceptions are the following:

III. 406 (432) *uota superuacua fletusque et numina diuum
naturae leges fatorumque arguit ordo.*

XII. 533 (465 B) *fati non uincitur ordo.*

In the following inscription the idea of envy and hostility on the part of the fates is more prominent than that of an unvaried order of events.

III. 6384 (1206) *inuida Parcarum series liuorque malignus
bis septena mea ruperunt stamina lucis.*

An expression which has been interpreted as similar in thought to the last mentioned is found

III. 3397 (555) *inuida fatorum genesis mihi sustulit illum.*

The *inuida fatorum genesis* of this epitaph is usually compared with Lucan (I. 70) *inuida fatorum series*. There would seem, however, no justification either in literature or inscrip-

tions for the assumption that *genesis* can be used in any such sense as is implied in the comparison. If the writer of this epitaph had desired to express the idea of a fixed order of events, he would doubtless have used the word *series* which would suit the metre as well as *genesis*; for we do not find in the rest of the epitaph any effort to express common thoughts in bold and unusual form. Let us compare this expression with the following :

X. 4022 quoniam me tibi tullit genesis iniqua.

XII. 2039 iniqua stella et genesis mala.

VI. 17130 (963) inuidus aurato surrexit mihi Lucifer astro,
cum miserum me urget inuidia.

IX. 5041 (984) hic puer infirmis etiam nunc uiribus ut quoi
octauom ingrediens sidera conficerent.

V. 3466 planetam suum procurare uos moneo ; in Nemese ne fidem
habeatis ; sic sum deceptus.

V. 7047 (1092) astro nato nihil est sperabile datum.

III. 2722 properavit aetas, uoluit hoc astrum meum.

XII. 955 (470) si haliquit casu alite[r] aduxerit aster.

These epitaphs display the same belief in a mysterious power determining the life of man which we have previously observed in our consideration of *fata*, *fortuna*, etc., but in these cases the power is associated with the stars. In the epitaph under consideration the horoscope of man still remains the essential idea, but in this case there is the added thought that the horoscope of man is determined by the fates. In VI. 9604 (1253) we meet with a similar use of the gen., *dubias fatorum clades*, disasters which befall mortals at the hands of the fates. The writer seems to have desired to combine the two ideas which in other epitaphs remained independent, that destiny was determined by the stars, and that destiny was determined by the fates.

With this class of epitaphs we may also compare

VI. 19914 (174) cot debuit facere filius,
scelesta gens fecit ut hoc faceret pater.

Bücheler's note on *gens* is as follows: "Utrum scelerati homines an mala genesis scriptori observata sit parum liquet." In objection to the first alternative we may say that *gens* is not found elsewhere in literature or in the inscriptions as equivalent to *homines*. This fact is pointed out in a note on this epitaph in the *C.I.L.* Another objection to this interpretation, and one of at least equal weight to my mind, is the fact that it is not in harmony with the usage of the epitaphs to introduce such a marked change in the thought of this oft-recurring formula. Its purport is elsewhere invariably the same, *i.e.* that death or destiny has compelled the father to perform that service for the son which in the ordinary course of nature the son should have performed for the father. It is in harmony with the usage of the inscriptions also to find *scelestus* and *sceleratus* used in connection with words associated with death. We meet in VI. 7579 *scelestum discidium*. The dropping of syllables is not an uncommon error of the inscriptions, as *horatam* for *honoratam*, VI. 3452.

The frequent use of such words as *sors*, *fors*, and *casus* seems to imply that destiny is determined by mere chance or accident, and that it baffles all calculation.

VI. 25781 (1219) abrupti dirae sortis iniqua dies.

VI. 29609 (974) inuida sors fati rapuisti Vitalem.

V. 6808 (63) queror fortunae cassum tam iniquom et graue[m].

III. 2964 (1141) quam fors ad superos noluit esse diu.

VI. 9118 (467), VI. 19049 (545), VI. 25063 (1549), V. 1710 (640),
 XI. 531 (1170), XIV. 1821 (563), II. 5478 (1158), III. 9623
 (627), VIII. 152 (516), VIII. 8870 (501), VIII. 10828 (110),
 VIII. 18792 (1788), XIII. 2077.

The beliefs reflected in the epitaphs of the common people of Rome do not seem to differ materially from those of the primitive people of the Indo-European family. Nature displayed her power to primitive man in nothing more forcibly than death. Its approach was unseen, and it came with irresistible might, filling the hearts of all with dread and alarm. Death, and the unseen power which caused death, appear to

have been among the first forces of nature to be personified. That Moera was originally a goddess of nature is suggested by Aphrodite Urania, whom Pausanias (I. 19, 2) calls the eldest of the Moerae, and by Gaea, whom Hesiod (*Theog.* 891 ff.) represents as controlling the destiny of the primitive world when the Titans held sway. Such a personification was the first step in the development of mythology. Everywhere in Homer we see the tendency to personification, and we can catch a glimpse of this early process of transformation of abstract ideas into the more definite forms of deities. Here *θάνατος* and *κῆρ* appear, not as gods, but rather as the personifications of an abstract idea. Moera, too, is used in the singular except in one case, which is evidently of later origin, and is the personification of the idea of portion or destiny of every living being. As destiny came to assume more definite features it was conceived under the image of the three fates. They are represented as daughters of the night (Hes. *Theog.* 218), and are accordingly ranked among the earliest deities and as pre-existent to Zeus. They are still conceived as mere allegorical beings without a father, mere abstractions, like death and sleep. When Zeus rose to be the supreme ruler of the universe, the conception of the Moerae changed at the hands of the poets. They came to be represented as the daughters of Zeus and Themis. They were henceforth often regarded as subordinate to Zeus, and as mere tools in his hands to execute his will. The earlier conception of the absolute supremacy of destiny still remained the popular view, and even in the literary works of Rome was not wholly supplanted by the more elaborate inventions of a later time.

The fact that the *Iliad* was composed at a time when the conception of fate had not taken the definite form which it assumed in later mythology and had not yet been brought into harmony with the supremacy of Zeus leads to apparent contradictions in the relations of Moera and Zeus. At one time Moera is regarded as supreme, and Zeus and the other gods merely execute her decrees; at another time Zeus is the supreme ruler. In Roman literature we find a similar lack of harmony prevailing in relation to the power of destiny

and of the gods. Here the idea of fate is associated with the names of various deities, but the fundamental idea seems to be the same as that which we have observed in the epitaphs. No distinct personality was attached to these various deities, and even in Vergil fate is an impersonal power, and forms a background on which appear the more or less lifelike forms of the deities of Greek origin. Though the heroes of the *Aeneid* are represented as offering prayer to Jupiter as the omnipotent god, still we realize that the national feeling and even the more fundamental sentiment of the poet are reflected in such lines as :

fortuna omnipotens et ineluctabile fatum.

It is in the prominence given to fate that Vergil reflects the sentiments of the people, and it is this which has largely contributed to make him the popular poet of Rome. The idea of fate occurs in the *Aeneid* with monotonous frequency. It has been pointed out that *fatum* and *fata* are used upwards of forty times in the first three books. The view of fate presented in the *Aeneid* is evidently a concession on the part of the poet to the national consciousness; for the emphasis which the poet lays on destiny tends to lessen the interest which he wishes should centre about the human and divine actors in this drama. This single instance must suffice to illustrate how the Roman authors waver between the primitive conception of the supremacy of fate and the later idea of the supremacy of Jupiter and of the other gods.

This study of the sepulchral inscriptions seems to me to warrant the conclusion that Cicero, Seneca, and Juvenal were right when they said that the stories of the lower world and of its gods were universally regarded as idle tales. These epitaphs furnish a strong argument against the view held by Friedländer (*Sittengeschichte*, III.⁶ 755). He considers that the story of Charon and the other myths connected with the lower world were generally accepted by the common people as a part of their religious creed. We are warranted in advancing still further in our conclusions and in maintaining that the common people had no more faith

in the gods of the upper world than they had in those of the lower.

We may also conclude that the common people did not conceive of *fata* as deities, or as determined by deities. The figures of the spinning Parcae might sometimes be chiselled on tombs as symbolic of death, or their names might be employed in epitaphs as poetic adornment, but in reality fate was to the Romans an inexplicable and irresistible force which regulated human life and which often interrupted it before it had run its natural course.

I shall consider in a second paper the views of the common people with regard to death and immortality, and I shall hope to show that Juvenal was right when he said (I. 149) that only children believed in the existence of the Manes.